

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE
HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE
HONORABLE JOHN JOSEPH
MOAKLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 31st a vigil service honoring our friend and colleague JOE MOAKLEY was held at the Massachusetts Statehouse in Boston.

During the service, Father J. Donald Monan and Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY both gave moving tributes to JOE. I'd ask that both sets of remarks be included at an appropriate place in the RECORD.

VIGIL SERVICE IN HONOR OF JOHN JOSEPH
MOAKLEY, 1927–2001

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, MAY
31, 2001

(Homily by J. Donald Monan, S.J.)

"Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Both here in Boston and in the tiny Central American country of El Salvador, this is the final week of the Easter Season, the season when Christ's death is still fresh in our memories, but when we celebrate in faith our confidence in newly-risen life. In the three short days since Memorial Day, the word of Joe's passing has kindled not only the brilliance of the City's writers and its cameramen; it touched their hearts as well. Every step along the route of his public career, from the streets of South Boston to the halls of Washington, has been faithfully, even lovingly portrayed.

Those portraits I will not attempt to retrace this evening. I believe that there is one reason why Congressman Moakley suggested that I have the privilege of speaking this evening. Joe frequently and publicly said that of all the accomplishments that were his in over forty years of public service, his proudest accomplishment was in bringing to light the truth about the atrocious murders of six Jesuit priest-educators and their housekeepers at the University of Central America in El Salvador. It was that thin but sharp ray of light that was the beginning of the return of peace and justice to that troubled land.

As one who stood on the ground in El Salvador during Joe's work there, I would like to recreate, as much as I can ten years later, the circumstances that made what he did so important to the world and so proud an accomplishment to Joe. Why did a gruesome murder three thousand miles away stir Joe Moakley to what he considered his greatest accomplishment?

The persons murdered were Jesuit priests and two of their housekeepers. People the world over, if they know of the existence of Jesuits, think of us as educators. But Jesuit education, especially at the University of Central America, has never pursued knowledge merely for its own sake, but always as a cultural force to bring about greater equality among people, as an instrument to improve the condition of the human family, to ease the oppression that comes from poverty, at times, even the oppression of political leaders who use well-trained armies to enforce their oppression.

Such was the case in El Salvador in the decade of the '80s. As Ignatio Ellacuria, the

murdered Jesuit President of the University of Central America expressed it: "The reality of El Salvador, the reality of the Third World, that is, the reality of most of this world—is fundamentally characterized by the—predominance of falsehood over truth, injustice over justice, oppression over freedom, poverty over abundance, in sum, of evil over good—that is the reality with which we live—and we ask ourselves what to do about it in a university way. We answer—: We must transform it, do all we can to ensure that—freedom (predominates) over oppression, justice over injustice, truth over falsehood, and love over hatred. If a university does not decide to make this commitment, we do not understand what validity it has as a university. Much less as a Christian-inspired university."

It was because of this message successfully being communicated that at one o'clock in the morning of November 16, 1989, a battalion of troops entered the campus of the Jesuit University in El Salvador, roused the Jesuit President and five of his brother professors from their sleep, forced them onto a little plot of grassy land behind their simple residence, and then dispatched them on the spot. They then proceeded to shoot up the surrounding buildings with machine guns to make the murders look as though they were perpetrated by guerrilla forces.

It all appears so clear-cut and transparent today. But when it happened, the Military High Command issued a statement declaring that it had been guerrillas that were responsible for the murders. The American Embassy, whose government had trained here in the States some of the very trigger men who committed those murders, pointed the finger of blame not at the military, but at the guerrillas.

In January of 1990, the Speaker of the House appointed Congressman Joe Moakley to an extraordinary, select committee to investigate the crimes in El Salvador. In some ways, that appointment changed Joe Moakley's life forever. But for all who knew him best, from the Speaker who appointed him to the former Speaker who encouraged him, that appointment simply tapped into the rich veins of faith and determination and courage, veins of optimistic hope and of care for those most in need that had been his since childhood.

Faith was not something that Joe wore on his sleeve or that made people uncomfortable, yet it was a perspective that he brought to everything he did in public and private life. It was a lifelong perspective on himself and on the people around him. In that perspective, he saw the inviolable dignity of every human person and the irresistible call of those in need; faith gave a new dimension to his sense of justice and of fairness; it made him unswerving when the powerful served themselves at the expense of the weak. It was this faith and his courage and sense of justice Joe Moakley brought to El Salvador.

The measure of Joe Moakley's faith and of his courage in carrying out his charge is the measure of the forces that opposed him—not a few ruthless individuals, but the US-trained military establishment of a sovereign nation that could enforce silence on witnesses as effectively as it had committed murder. Perhaps most difficult of all, Joe also faced the embarrassing efforts of some of his own governmental colleagues to set false trails away from the guilty and to withhold keys to the truth that they themselves held.

There is no doubt but that the authoritative voice of one man and his courage to use it ultimately broke the dam of silence and kindled hope that peace and justice could again be realities. Within a year of his

appointment, criminal investigations in El Salvador were raised to the level of full trials. For the first time in history, two military officers were convicted for their part in the crime. Within another year, peace accords were signed in the U.N. between the government and its warring opponents. And although those suspected of ultimately ordering the murders were never tried, and men who confessed to killing the University Jesuits were exonerated for acting under orders, the system of governmentally-organized oppression and murder had been broken. Thanks to Joe, the truth had come to light; the nation itself has begun to taste the first fruits of peace. And in the light of that truth and that peace, a whole people have realistically begun to live again.

What made this story the greatest accomplishment of Joe's public life? It was its straight-line continuity with what Joe had done all his life. It simply played out on a world stage Joe's lifelong faith in the inviolable dignity of every human being, his unique sense of justice and fairness and the unswerving courage he had always shown on behalf of those who were weak and in need. That was what Joe had been for forty years in South Boston and in the halls of Congress, and most of all, it was what he had believed from the first time he heard the Gospel message in his Parish Church, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

REMARKS OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY VIGIL SERVICE FOR CONGRESSMAN JOE MOAKLEY, STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MAY 31, 2001

It's an honor to be here with all of you this evening to pay tribute to our dear friend Joe Moakley, a remarkable Congressman, an outstanding leader and one of the best friends Massachusetts ever had.

Joe tried so hard in recent months to prepare us for this moment, but none of us was ready for this loss. It was simply too hard to contemplate. But as Shakespeare wrote, our "cause of sorrow must not be measured by his worth, for then it hath no end." And Joe's worth, his decency, his legacy truly do have no end.

Joe Moakley's life was a life of service to his country and to his community, and he was one of the most beloved political leaders of our time. He had a zest for life and a love of Congress not for the glory it might bring to him, but for the good he could do for the people.

All of us who served with Joe admired his strength, his wisdom, his dedication to public service, and his incredible common touch that inspired the people he served so well and made them love him so deeply in return. The Irish poet could have been talking about Joe when he said that there were no strangers, only friends he didn't met.

Joe was a patriot in the truest sense of the word. He joined the Navy at 15 to serve his country in World War II, and he served honorably and well.

He returned home and pursued higher education under the G.I. Bill, eventually earning a law degree. And as it should be in this great land, Joe Moakley's future was limitless—from the Boston City Council to the Massachusetts Legislature to the halls of Congress, where he earned the respect and admiration of colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Joe worked long and hard and well, and always in the service of the people.

And what a beautiful team Joe and his wife Evelyn made. We loved them both so much, and now, they are together again.

We were never surprised to hear that Joe was a boxer in college, because in all the years we worked with him in Congress, he

was always fighting for the underdog, constantly helping those who needed help the most, battling skillfully and tirelessly for better jobs, better education, better health care, better lives and better opportunities for the people he so proudly served. How fitting that it was our Joe Moakley who shined the light of truth and justice on the atrocities in El Salvador and changed our national policy to protect human rights and promote democracy in that country. Yes, Joe's life was a life of constant service.

When I think of all Joe has done for Boston and Massachusetts, I recall how brilliantly he fought for support to build the South Boston Piers Transitway, to clean up Boston Harbor, to modernize the Port of Boston, to preserve so many Massachusetts historic sites—the Old State House, the Old South Meeting house, the USS Constitution, Dorchester Heights, our world-renowned marketplace, Faneuil Hall—and, of course, the new federal courthouse that now proudly bears his name. Because of Joe Moakley's leadership in protecting and preserving and creating these extraordinary aspects of our heritage, they will always be part of our state's history and our nation's history too—and so will Joe.

Even in recent months, even in recent days, even while Joe struggled so bravely with the illness that finally took his life, he continued to do the work of the people he loved so dearly.

And at a stage when others might be winding down or turning inward, Joe continued to turn outward, establishing a charitable foundation to make the dream of education a reality for young people. The G.I. Bill had given Joe a chance to reach for the stars, and Joe's commitment, through his foundation, will give countless young people a chance to reach for the stars too. Joe never forgot where he came from, and he never stopped working to serve the people he loved so much.

He was elected to the Massachusetts House in 1952—the same year that a young Congressman named John F. Kennedy was first elected to the Senate. And now, the Moakley Public Speaking Institute—to be launched this summer at the Kennedy Library to teach public speaking skills and public service to local low-income high school students—will forever link Joe Moakley to President Kennedy.

As my brother said so eloquently on the eve of his inauguration, in his farewell address here to the State Legislature:

“When at some future date the high court of history sits in judgment on each of us, our success or failure will be measured by the answers to four questions:

—Were we truly men of courage?

—Were we truly men of judgment?

—Were we truly men of integrity?

—Were we truly men of dedication?

Measured by those four high standards, Joe Moakley was “four for four”—he battled a thousand in the annals of public life.

Service to his nation. Service to his State. Service to his District. Service to his people. Service. Service. Service.

It's no wonder that God chose to call him home on Memorial Day—the national day of honor for those who served the nation so well. We miss you, Joe, and we always will.

Near the end of Pilgrim's Progress, there is a passage that tells of the death of Valiant, and it could well have been written about Joe Moakley:

“Then, he said, I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not regret me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought his battle who now will be my rewarder.

“When the day that must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river-side, into which as he went he said, ‘Death, where is thy sting?’ and as he went down deeper, he said, ‘Grave, where is thy victory?’ So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

HONORING “THE GRAMMY MAN”, JOHN BILLINGS

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 13, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to stand before you today and pay tribute to the

shinning star of the Western Slope of Colorado. That's where John Billings the Grammy Man resides. He is only the second man ever to create, by hand, each gold gramophone statue that is presented at the GRAMMYS.

Every year since 1958, that gold gramophone has been handed to some of the biggest recording stars in the industry. John is the only person allowed by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences to make what is arguably the industry's highest honor—the Grammy statuette. When John started in 1977, there were only 51 categories, today there are 100. John spends five months a year casting about 300 awards. “It's kind of unique that in just 43 years, two of us have made them,” John said. “It's a dying art and a lost craft, and somebody's got to keep it alive.”

John grew up in Van Nuys, California during the 1960's, where he used to hang around the garage workshop of his neighbor Bob Graves, the original maker of the Grammy statuette. After Bob began to lose his eyesight making the creation of the statues difficult, he asked John if he would like to become the next craftsman. He would spend the next 7 years learning the craft. “One of the last things he said to me was ‘Don't ever let anyone get those Grammys away from you.’” When John cannot make the award any longer, he will pass the tradition to his son.

For the last 25 years John has perfected its design. “I have sat in the audience for so many years, and I sit there and cry. To see something that I have made to honor this person, and they're standing there holding it up in the air like it's an Olympic medal. There is really a lot of pride in that, and I think that's what keeps me going.”

Mr. Speaker, the statue is a labor of love and a matter of pride for John. Los Angeles may be the real home of the Grammy Awards, but Ridgeway, Colorado is much bigger in the eyes of the music industry. He is truly one of a kind.